

Author Ripley Still Baffled By Some of H'wood's Doings

By Jay Cormody

Clement Ripley is a writer who likes Hollywood and working for movie producers, but after 12 years of experience with both, he finds the ways of the cinema inscrutable. Rather dramatically inscrutable.

Mr. Ripley dropped off in Washington for a few hours between planes bound for Hollywood. At luncheon he could not help asking aloud a question that was on his mind.

"I am on my way to do a screen script of 'Rome Hanks' for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer," he said. "That's a nice assignment. But what bothers me is this: Metro has owned the script of the novel for several years. It has been resting there on a library shelf. Apparently, no one has given it a thought since it was purchased. Can some one tell me how it is that, like lightning, some one picks up 'Rome Hanks' decides to produce it, and writes me to be in Hollywood within 48 hours. Why this life or death suddenness after all those years?"

No one at the table could answer Ripley's question.

"But," some one did suggest, "suppose you find out when you get there and let us know the answer."

That is a price writers frequently pay for asking questions and Ripley agreed to pay. When his answer comes, this department will print it, which makes Ripley hero of the first continued story ever to appear here.

What made Ripley so suddenly aware of the lapse of time since he last thought of "Rome Hanks" was that he could not buy a copy anywhere in New York or Washington.

"I've sort of forgotten the detail," said the man whose "Jezebel" was a story not unlike the one he will adapt. "I'd like to read it on the plane on the way out. Bless me, if I can find a copy of it."

Carter Barron, anticipating just such a need on Ripley's part, had a copy.

Ripley, a Charleston, S. C., author who looks suave like one of that community's first citizens, is no longer surprised by Hollywood's ways. A bit bewildered, to be sure, not never genuinely surprised.

He got over the latter 12 years ago when he had his first experience with the movies.

"I was just growing out of being a pulp magazine writer," he recalls. "I had sold my first novelette to one of the larger slicks which had paid me the big sum of \$1,250. That was big money and my wife and I were both mighty set up about it."

"Then a few days later, my agent called. I was not home, but when I got the message I knew it was about a Hollywood deal for the story. We talked it over. My wife, suddenly stricken with pride in my ability, made me promise I wouldn't take a cent less than \$1,500 for the story. I promised, although I told myself that I would take \$1,000, or maybe even \$750."

Ripley got the agent on long distance. He was right about the call relating to a Hollywood deal. But he was insanely out of line on what Hollywood was willing to pay.

"I couldn't believe my agent when he said the first bidder was offering \$7,500," Ripley says. "I asked him to spell it out for me. He did and for a minute I couldn't talk. Finally, I sputtered that he was not to let the studio man out of the office without getting a contract. I did not know there was that much money in the world."

The agent did know it, however. He left the Ripleys unhinged by telling them that he wouldn't close the deal.

"I thought the man had lost his mind," Ripley remembers. "I called him back and told him so. All he did was tell me to be calm and hang up on me."

A few days later, the agent called back to say the offer had been hiked to \$15,000.

This time, Ripley really was fit to be tied. When the agent still insisted upon holding out, he threatened to take the deal into his own hands, but the agent warned him that he was not to answer any telephone calls, telegrams or letters. That was his job under the contract, the agent warned the writer.

"Next time," Ripley recalls, "he called to tell me the offer was \$22,500. I did not argue with him. I got on a train and went to New York. When I got there, the agent was not in his office. His secretary said she did not know where he was. I looked for him a couple of days and then concluded the whole thing was a nightmare and that I might as well go into the nearest saloon and forget it. I called my wife and she said she thought that was a fine idea."

On Monday, however, the agent showed up, this time with a final contract disposing of the story for \$30,000.

"But, do you know, even that



Mt. Vernon Players In Own Version Of "Lysistrata"

By Harry MacArthur

The Mt. Vernon Players rapidly are assuming a position among the community's amateur theater groups where nothing amateurish will be permitted of them. Currently the group, representing the Department of Drama of the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church, is

enhancing its reputation at the Undercroft Auditorium with a lively production of a comedy-with-music called "Lysistrata '47."

This particular "Lysistrata" bears only enough resemblance to the original that Aristophanes, upon seeing it, might recall that he did a play on much that same theme one time. Whether he would prefer his own original or "Lysistrata '47," we are not prepared to say. We can tell you, though, that Edward Mangum and Albert Berkowitz have contrived a usually comic lark with

the first "Lysistrata" as a foundation, that Mr. Berkowitz has written some pleasant tunes for the performers to sing and that the whole is acted with a great deal of spirit. If, on occasion, there is more spirit than finish about some of the acting, it is a fault that in this case must be called a minor one, easy to overlook. It is not a fault that is

the private property of the non-professional theater, anyhow.

This "Lysistrata" still tells the story of those brave Athenian pacifists led by Lysistrata, who went on a "love strike" to inform their mates forcefully that they could show allegiance to Mars or Venus,

but not both. In addition, it pokes some satirical fun at a great number of things about modern life—Government and Army life and several other aspects of today's living that seem always to be sitting

(See MacARTHUR, Page A-19.)

Dean Doyle Honored

Dean Henry Gratton Doyle of Columbian College, George Washington University, has been appointed a member of the Committee on Institutions of Higher Education of the Middle Atlantic States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

SUSPECT—Lynn Bari plays a leading role in "Nocturne," a picture in which 10 beautiful brunettes are suspected of doing in a song writer. It opens tomorrow at the Earle.

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